



# Tennessee Pathways Certification

Application User Guide

Tennessee Pathways | March 2019





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## Introduction

We believe that all students deserve access to high-quality careers that provide a living wage and opportunities for advancement. Tennessee Pathways creates alignment between K-12, postsecondary education, and employers so that students have a clear and guided pathway to gain the knowledge and experience needed to move seamlessly into the workforce.

Tennessee Pathways is structured around the following key elements:

- High-quality college and career advisement throughout K-12;
- Rigorous early postsecondary and work-based learning opportunities in high school; and
- Seamless vertical alignment between K-12, postsecondary programs, and career opportunities as a result of effective partnerships among school districts, higher education institutions, employers, and community organizations.





## **Tennessee Pathways Certification**

The Tennessee Pathways Certification process acknowledges high schools that have strong systems in place structured around these three key elements. High schools earning the Certification will have developed clear and guided pathways for their students that are built upon partnerships among K-12, postsecondary education, and employers. Schools can earn the Certification through an application process and site visit. Once certified, schools qualify for statewide recognition and additional grants to support their programs. In addition, schools that engage with Tennessee Pathways should see an increase in their accountability measures according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), as well as heightened scores on the Ready Graduate Indicator. Lastly, this recognition program ensures students, families, and the community are aware that high-quality pathways exist for students to transition seamlessly from K-12 education into higher education and high-quality employment.

### **Regional Coordinators**

Tennessee Pathways regional coordinators are on-the-ground advisors working to connect schools, colleges, and employers to create opportunities for students. Schools that have begun intentional work to establish pathways may already have the appropriate systems in place for a high-quality application, requiring little assistance from their Tennessee Pathways regional coordinator. However, schools that are new to creating pathways or that may have gaps in their pathways are encouraged to work closely with their assigned Tennessee Pathways regional coordinator through the application process. Regional coordinators can help bridge the gap between K-12 education, postsecondary, and employers, and can assist schools with developing new partnerships that create a seamless flow for students in specific areas of elective focus. The Tennessee Pathways regional coordinators across the state can be found along with their assigned region and contact information [here](#).

This guide outlines specific requirements of the Certification, supporting documentation needed, and resources for each element of the application. We encourage districts to refer to this guide and other resources housed in ePlan frequently while completing their applications. Specific questions can be directed to your Tennessee Pathways regional coordinator.

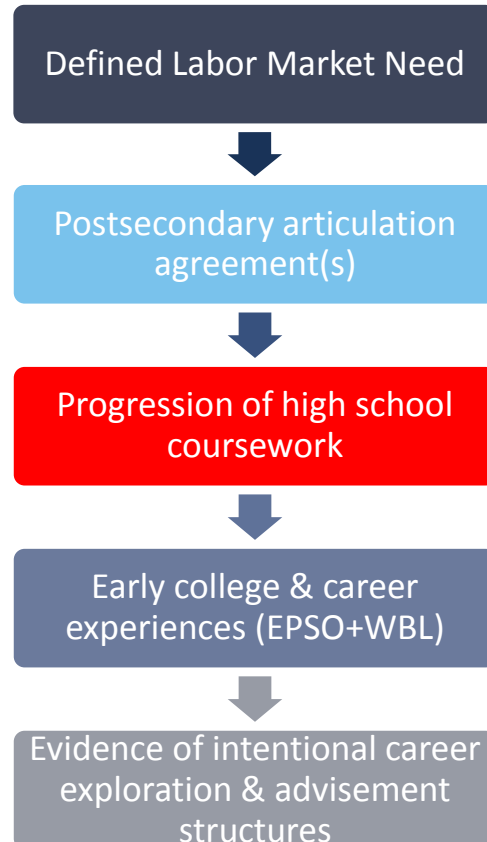
## Seamless Pathways

What is a pathway?

**pathway** (n): a series of structured, connected, real-world learning opportunities that integrate rigorous academics, career-focused learning, and postsecondary education empowering students to explore career possibilities and succeed in higher education and the world of work.

- A pathway is composed of high school coursework, early postsecondary opportunities, work-based learning experiences, and opportunities to earn an industry certification and/or articulate credits at a partner postsecondary institution.
- A pathway should accelerate a student's progress toward an industry or postsecondary credential thereby reducing time and cost as a student transitions from education to employment.
- A pathway should include opportunities for a student to stack credentials—that is, build from one credential to the next in order to gain knowledge and skills that can lead to higher wages and broader employment opportunities.
- A pathway is a process of discernment, not a destination. Pathways are not intended to place students on tracks. They simply provide a jumpstart toward a student's chosen path.

**Figure A:** Components of a Certified Tennessee Pathway

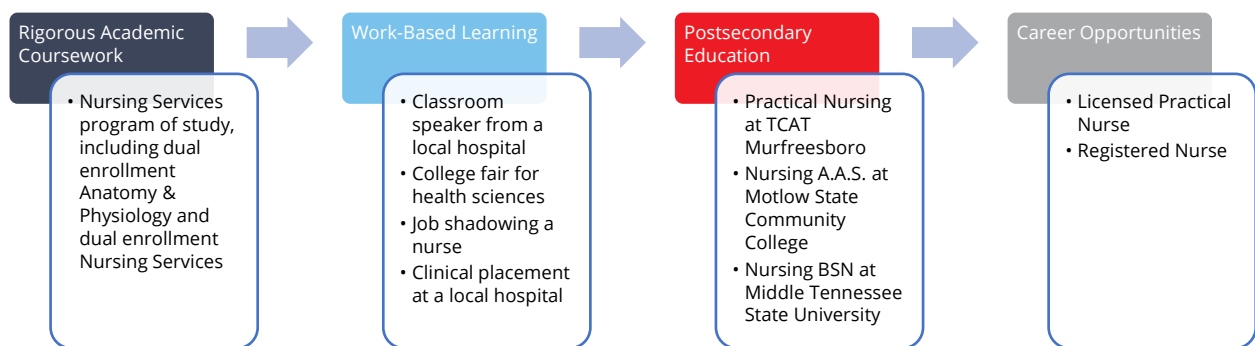


In order for a pathway to qualify for the Tennessee Pathways Certification, it must have the components listed below along with supporting documentation:

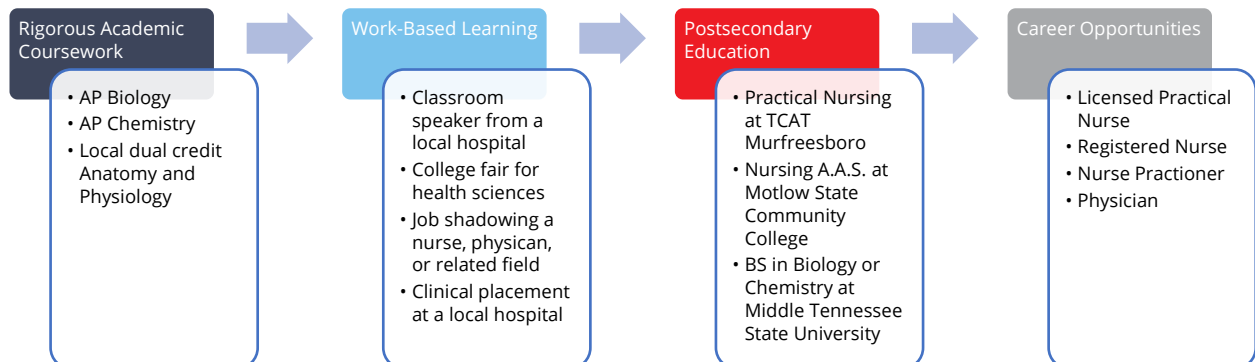
- a minimum of **three** courses in a specific area of elective focus and/or program of study at the high school level,
- a minimum of **two** early postsecondary opportunities aligned to the identified pathway (for example, statewide dual credit statistics and dual enrollment Mechatronics I),
- a partnership agreement with at least one postsecondary institution, and
- a spectrum of career-related experiences and advisement for grades 9-12 that include a partnership with at least one employer providing career-related experiences for students.

Our vision is for all students to have access to pathways and workplace experiences. For this reason, both CTE and non-CTE pathways can be submitted. Below you will find examples for each type of pathway, showing each of the components listed above.

**Figure B:** CTE pathway in Nursing Services



**Figure C:** Non-CTE pathway in Health Sciences





## Certification Timeline

Action Step	Due Date
Intent to Apply opens	<b>Jan. 31</b>
Intent to Apply closes	<b>Feb. 22</b>
Application template, model application, and application guide are released	<b>Feb. 28</b>
Application opens in ePlan	<b>March 4</b>
Application closes	<b>April 15</b>
Formal recognition/announcement of Certified Pathways	<b>June 2019</b>

The formal application for the Tennessee Pathways Certification will be accessible to districts in ePlan on March 4, 2019. Applications, along with supporting documentation, will be reviewed on a rolling basis by a designated team against criteria that is outlined in this guide. Schools earning the Certification will be recognized in early summer 2019. Once a pathway is certified, we will assist schools in marketing their certified pathway(s) to students and families as a clear and guided route to achieve their chosen career goals.

**All applications for the Tennessee Pathways Certification must be submitted by April 15, 2019.**

## Application Process

The Tennessee Pathways Certification application can be found in ePlan in the LEA Document Library. Throughout the application, high schools will have an opportunity to highlight the existing pathways that are offered to students, along with the partnerships with postsecondary institutions and employers that have been carefully cultivated to serve students.

There are three components of the application:

- 1) An application cover sheet that identifies the high school and the pathway(s) that will be submitted.
  - ⇒ This cover sheet should be used to identify **all** pathways that will be submitted by each high school.
- 2) An in-depth application to describe the pathway that is being submitted for Certification
  - ⇒ An individual application must be submitted for **each** pathway.
- 3) A labor market information template to demonstrate the labor market need for the pathway.
  - ⇒ A tailored labor market information template should be completed for **each** pathway.



## ***Guidelines for Saving Application Documents in ePlan***

In an effort to organize your district's application materials to ensure completeness, we ask that the application materials and supporting documents be saved in ePlan using a specific document naming format. **When uploading document files, please use the following format:**  
DistrictCode\_SchoolCode\_PathwayTitle\_NameofDocument

Examples of file names for each document type are listed below:

- **Cover sheet:** 190\_20\_Mechatronics\_CoverSheet
- **Application:** 190\_20\_Mechatronics\_Application
- **LMI template:** 190\_20\_Mechatronics\_LMITemplate
- **Master schedule (or other supporting documentation):**  
190\_20\_Mechatronics\_MasterSchedule1819

### ***Cover Sheet***

One cover sheet should be submitted for each high school outlining which pathways are being submitted for review.

**High School Information:** In this section, identify the high school along with a primary contact person (typically the district lead or a designated school representative) and an optional secondary contact person. The primary and secondary contacts should be able to address questions (should they arise) about the components of the application and the pathways being considered for certification.

**Pathway(s) Submitted for Certification:** Identify the area(s) of elective focus/program(s) of study for each pathway submitted and indicate the total number of pathways you plan to submit.

**Cross-Sector Partnerships:** If your high school is submitting more than one pathway, provide a description of how cross-sector partners are involved across these pathways. For example, one employer in your area may offer experiences for students in multiple pathways, or a local postsecondary institution may offer early postsecondary courses in more than one pathway.

### ***Application Template***

#### **Section 1: Labor Market Justification**

In this section, outline the industry sector(s) aligned to the pathway on the application template. Use the **labor market template** in ePlan to provide local, regional, and/or statewide data showing how the pathway is aligned to economic and labor market needs. Please provide labor market data to justify the area of elective focus and/or program of study. Labor market data can be found using the following resources and tools:

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| ✓ <a href="#">TNECD County Profile Tool</a>       | ✓ <a href="#">Jobs4TN</a>      |
| ✓ <a href="#">2018 LEAP Occupational Analysis</a> | ✓ <a href="#">InformTN</a>     |
| ✓ <a href="#">TSBA District Data Dashboard</a>    | ✓ <a href="#">O*NET Online</a> |

If the pathway your school is submitting is not captured in traditional labor market information, you may still submit the pathway for certification. For example, there is a need for educators in many





communities across Tennessee and in many communities the local school system is the largest employer. Educators do not always show up clearly in labor market data, so a school submitting an education and training high school pathway for certification would need to describe the local labor demand for educators on the labor market information template. A school could provide a written statement from a community leader, such as a mayor or president of a local chamber of commerce that communicates a demand for the area of elective focus and/or program of study. An employer statement justifying the demand for the pathway is also acceptable.

Required Documentation: Labor market template in ePlan.

Optional Documentation: Additional documents to support the labor market justification.

## **Section 2: Certified Pathway Elective Focus and Aligned Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs)**

In this section, enter at least three course names and course codes that make up the pathway. Additional aligned courses may be entered, but only three are required for the Certification. A minimum of two EPSOs must be offered as a component of or in addition to elective focus coursework. Reference **Figures B** and **C** on page 6 and the exemplar application in ePlan for examples of how courses and EPSOs can be sequenced.

If an industry certification or culminating credential is offered as a part of the pathway, list it in this section. Reference column H in the ESSA Industry Certification Conversion Table linked below and on the application template to enter any conversion information that would need to be considered for an industry certification offered in the pathway. For example, if the industry certification offered in the pathway is Adobe Certified Associate, the ESSA conversion would be "Industry certification + 2 EPSO."

Refer to the resources below for course codes, implementation of EPSOs, and the ESSA conversion table:

- ✓ [Correlation of Course Codes Document](#)
- ✓ [ESSA Industry Certification Conversion Table](#)
- ✓ [EPSO Implementation Guide](#)

Required Documentation: Master schedule for 2018-19 and documentation outlining course offerings for 2019-20.

## **Section 3: Postsecondary Articulation Agreement(s)**

In this section of the application, list postsecondary institutions that accept dual credit or dual enrollment credit for courses listed in the course sequence for the pathway in Section 2. If the pathway includes other types of EPSOs, you will also have the opportunity to describe the postsecondary institutions and programs where students typically use this credit along with any other postsecondary partnership activities.

The resources below may be helpful as you consider your postsecondary partnerships and articulation agreements:

- ✓ [TBR System Institutions](#)
- ✓ [TN Transfer Pathways](#)



**Required Documentation:** Articulation agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining the partnership between the high school and postsecondary institution for local dual credit or dual enrollment courses in the pathway.

#### Section 4: Employer Partnerships

In this section of the application, identify employer partners that provide learning or advising opportunities relevant to the pathway. You may also write a description of the career-related opportunities the employer provides. Each area of elective focus and/or program of study that is being submitted as a pathway must have at least one employer partner. We recommend having MOUs outlining each partnership agreement between the high school and the employer. However, it is also acceptable for employers to write a letter of support on their official company letterhead describing the partnership.

Each application should outline a spectrum of experiences for all high school students in grades 9-12. Employer partnerships are not just limited to onsite work-based learning experiences and should also extend to students in lower grades. Refer to the grid on the following page for examples of employer engagement activities by grade level. These are only examples and this is not an exhaustive list of activities.

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Career fair				
Guest speaker				
Industry/business tour				
Job shadowing				
Student-run enterprise				
Internship, clinical, or other work-based learning capstone experience				
Apprenticeship				

Below are additional resources about employer engagement and work-based learning:

✓ [TDOE Work-Based Learning Webpage](#)

✓ [Work-Based Learning Toolbox](#)

**Required Documentation:** A MOU or letter of support from each employer partner and a short description of the career-related experiences that are offered.

#### Section 5: College and Career Advisement

In this section of the application, outline advisement activities and experiences related to the pathway offered to high school students. While we know that advisement can and should occur throughout a student's K-12 experience, we ask that you provide information on advisement structures and experiences that are available to your high school students specifically.

Resources for college and career advisement:



✓ [CollegeforTN.org](https://CollegeforTN.org)

✓ [Path to College Events & Materials](#)

In this section, please also describe the **impact** of your college and career advisement activities during this school year (2018-19). For example, schools may have noticed an increase in EPSO enrollment or an increase in the attainment of industry certifications, which may be a result of the school hosting a special EPSO awareness event during EPSO week in October.

Reference the student milestones below for an example of how advising experiences for students can be sequenced across grade levels:

✓ [Student Milestones for College & Career Readiness](#)

Suggested Documentation: Timeline that identifies when college and career advisement experiences are generally offered to students in the pathway, evidence of events (e.g. flyers, photos, sign-in sheets, student surveys, etc.), data demonstrating impact of advising practices (e.g. trends in EPSO and postsecondary enrollment), etc.

## **Assurances**

To finalize submission of your district's application materials, have a district representative physically sign the assurances document acknowledging the following statements:

- I understand that all required supporting documentation must be submitted along with this application in order to be eligible for the Certification.
- I understand that each Tennessee Pathways Certification application will be reviewed by a team against certain evidence-based criteria in order to identify the strongest pathways. Submission of a complete application is not a guarantee that a pathway will be certified.
- I understand that any pathway(s) meeting certification criteria will be publicly announced locally and statewide.
- I understand that only one application can be submitted per district. I have worked with the appropriate district and school-level staff to compile my district's application for all high school pathways.
- I understand that submitting this signed document indicates that my application is complete and ready for review.

**Please note that uploading this document indicates that your application is complete and ready for review.**

### **Pre-Application**

- ☐ Identify school or district staff who will contribute to the application.
- ☐ Identify a district representative who can upload all application materials into ePlan.
- ☐ Locate application materials in the LEA Document Library in ePlan.

### **Application Completion**

- ☐ Complete one application cover sheet per high school.
  - ☐ Complete the application template and labor market information template for each pathway.
    - Number of pathways to be submitted: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Number of application templates: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Number of labor market information templates: \_\_\_\_\_
- (Note:** All numbers should match. There should be one application template and one labor market information template per pathway being submitted.)

### **Supporting Documentation**

These documents are required for **each** pathway being submitted for certification:

- ☐ Labor market information template
- ☐ Master schedule for 2018-19 and documentation outlining course offerings for 2019-20
- ☐ Postsecondary articulation agreement(s), if applicable
- ☐ Employer partner MOU(s), agreement(s), or letter(s) of support
- ☐ Evidence of college & career advisement

### **Application Submission**

- ☐ Upload completed cover sheet, application template(s), and labor market information template(s) to ePlan along with all supporting documentation by April 15, 2019.
- ☐ Upload physically signed assurances form, indicating that your district's application is complete and ready for review.

**Submitted By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_